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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 53rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS (continued) (A/47/24 and Add.1, A/47/353, 434, 445, 479, 501-504, 552, 626, 630, 668, 701 and 702; A/C.3/47/L.49)

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AGENDA ITEM 149: THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA (continued) (A/47/247; A/C.3/47/9)

1. Mr. LADSOUS (France) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Community on item 97 (b) and (c).

2. With regard to the situation in the former Yugoslavia, the reports submitted by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights (A/47/418-S/24516, A/47/635-S/24766 and A/47/666-S/24809) and the information provided by the Commission of Experts established under Security Council resolution 780 (1992) showed that measures were deliberately being carried out in the territory to implement a policy of ethnic cleansing, of which Muslims were the first victims and Serbian groups the main perpetrators. It was therefore essential to strengthen investigation and monitoring in order to gather information which, coupled with the principle of personal responsibility for crimes committed would provide a strong deterrent against human rights violations. The Special Rapporteur had a major role to play in that field and the General Assembly should support his recommendation to establish, in the former Yugoslavia, a standing network of human rights observers and should allocate specific funds to the Centre for Human Rights for that purpose.

3. At its forty-eighth session, the Commission on Human Rights had considered the establishment of an emergency mechanism to react to acute situations arising from gross violations of human rights. His delegation hoped that the Commission would resume consideration of that subject at its next session. That and other developments demonstrated that the Organization was seeking to enhance its capacity to deal with human rights violations, particularly those that constituted threats to international peace and security. While aware of the complex and sensitive nature of that question, his delegation was sure that the United Nations was moving in the right direction.

(Mr. Ladsous, France)

4. Development must be viewed as a global economic, social, cultural and political process aimed at ensuring the welfare of the individual. In that connection, he stressed that human rights should not be confused with civil and political rights, which were a component, albeit an essential one, of the former. Democracy was the best system for promoting and protecting individual and collective rights and was also essential for achieving lasting economic and social development.

5. It was therefore gratifying to note that the Secretary-General had received more than 30 requests from Governments for electoral assistance. The United Nations was being called upon to play a new role in that regard and needed to be able to respond speedily to such requests. However, action by the United Nations in that delicate field must be based on decisions by its competent bodies; such decisions could not be left to United Nations officials, however competent. In view of the growing number of requests for assistance, consideration should be given to financing such operations through the regular budget.

6. Recent events had also demonstrated that the holding of elections did not necessarily involve the establishment of a democratic climate. In addition to its traditional electoral assistance and clarification missions, the United Nations should first of all endeavour to establish a true culture of democracy in the countries concerned. The programme of advisory services and technical assistance of the Centre for Human Rights would be an ideal instrument for that purpose since there were numerous fields, including the drafting of legal texts, training and education, where it could conduct activities. Consideration should be given to ways of enhancing the Centre's advisory capability by giving it access to the human and financial resources of the Organization's operational programmes for development, particularly those of UNDP. There was also a need to increase the resources allocated to the Centre.

7. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights should focus on strengthening cooperation to promote a universal culture of human rights. The adoption by consensus of an agenda for the Conference would enhance the basis for the discussions on the final document and ensure further progress in the implementation of all human rights.

8. France stressed the importance of the adoption at the current session of the General Assembly of the draft declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/47/501) and the draft declaration on the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance (A/47/434). The United Nations could no longer ignore the fact that the mass disappearances were a form of political repression that combined the more serious human rights violations: torture, summary execution and arbitrary detention. His delegation welcomed the enormous contribution made in that connection by the Working Group on Detention, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and non-governmental organizations.

9. Mr. FSADNI (Malta) said that his delegation welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of a focal point for electoral assistance activities and the creation of the Electoral Assistance Unit in the Department of Political Affairs (A/47/668, paras. 9 and 10). The experience gained by the United Nations in providing electoral assistance would enable it to develop further the guidelines for involvement in that field. Consideration should be given to possible cooperation between the Unit and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Free and fair elections were essential to the democratic process and protection of human rights. Malta reaffirmed its support for United Nations efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and had extended its full support for the monitoring of elections in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States in order to promote fundamental democratic values.

10. His delegation took note of the Secretary-General's report on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights (A/47/502) and welcomed the increased cooperation between the United Nations and regional bodies and commissions. In 1987, Malta had made the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its first Protocol an integral part of its legislation, thus giving its citizens further protection under the law. As a State participating in CSCE, Malta had sponsored a number of proposals in the field of human rights relating, inter alia, to national minorities, migrant workers and abolition of the death penalty.

11. The importance of the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights could not be overstated. In order to promote efforts to reach a consensus on a provisional agenda for the Conference, his country had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18. Failure to reach consensus at that late stage could seriously jeopardize the successful outcome of the Conference. After assessing progress made since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Conference should focus primarily on improving the implementation of existing human rights instruments. Moreover, in view of the important role played by the Centre for Human Rights and its greatly increased workload, his delegation called upon the Secretary-General to ensure that sufficient resources were provided to the Centre.

12. He appreciated the international community's condemnation of the massive and systematic violation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the efforts by the United Nations, CSCE and the European Community to resolve that complex situation. In that regard, the Governments of Malta and Slovenia had made a joint proposal for the holding of a meeting of the CSCE Council of Ministers in Sarajevo itself. Such a meeting would demonstrate the international community's concern about the problem and help focus attention on it in order to find a solution.

13. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that the implementation of the international human rights instruments was essential for the protection and promotion of human rights. In view of the continued grave and massive violations of human rights in various parts of the world, there was a need to continue to seek alternative approaches to ensuring enjoyment of human rights. Costa Rica had supported the adoption of new legal instruments and had submitted a draft additional optional protocol to the Convention against Torture, which had been accepted by the Commission on Human Rights as a basis for discussion. Her country had also offered to host the regional preparatory meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. Costa Rica had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18, which contained in an annex a draft provisional agenda for the Conference.

14. It was gratifying to note the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Her delegation supported the initiative by Sweden concerning the periodicity and duration of the sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and felt that, in view of the importance of the Convention, the membership of the Committee should be expanded from 10 to 18 to enable it to carry out its work more effectively.

15. She noted with satisfaction the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.20/Rev.1, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General concerning a request to the United Nations to observe the referendum in Eritrea". Costa Rica welcomed the request by the Eritrean authorities, which should enable the people there to express their free and sovereign will. That demonstrated the important role of the United Nations in promoting the democratic process where necessary.

16. The establishment of an office of the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, as proposed many years earlier by her Government, was still being considered by the Commission on Human Rights. By virtue of its nature and permanent status, such a mechanism would be able to work more speedily than the special rapporteurs appointed by the Commission, and would also embody safeguards protecting State sovereignty.

17. The strongest argument in favour of establishing a high commissioner for human rights was the successful work of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). His delegation was convinced that a high commissioner for human rights could play a similar role to UNHCR in the cases of human rights situations calling for urgent action. Under the current system, United Nations bodies dealing with human rights were not mandated to meet on short notice and were thus unable to respond in cases of emergency.

18. At the same time, the situation showed some signs of improving. The crisis in the former Yugoslavia had prompted the first special session of the Commission on Human Rights, held in August 1992. Moreover, while the Security Council generally did not address itself directly to human rights issues, it had recently taken steps in situations calling for immediate action to alleviate human suffering.

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

19. Her Government wished to pay tribute to the special rapporteurs and representatives appointed by the Commission on Human Rights. Those individuals, often working against great odds, produced their well-documented and comprehensive human rights reports year after year. Her delegation called on the States concerned to cooperate in that effort.

20. Mr. OSVALD (Sweden) said that important advances had been made in ensuring respect for human rights worldwide. The United Nations had contributed substantially by elaborating a set of fundamental norms and establishing supervisory mechanisms to oversee their implementation. At the same time, serious violations of human rights persisted in many parts of the world and had to be addressed. In that connection, his delegation stressed its appreciation for the difficult work carried out by the special rapporteurs and representatives in the field of human rights. Many delegations would prefer to eliminate the reports on human rights situations in specific countries, claiming that such reports were biased or incomplete. While that might be the case to some extent, the reports nevertheless served a necessary function and called attention to particularly gross or systematic violations of human rights.

21. He reviewed the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which served as the yardstick against which each country's performance should be measured. His delegation believed that a country was neither pretentious nor self-righteous in drawing attention to human rights violations elsewhere as long as it acknowledged its own shortcomings in that area.

22. Some took the view that the international community should not concern itself with the human rights situations of individual States. His country disagreed strongly and could refute one by one the arguments that had been put forth to support such a view. First, the claim that reports by special rapporteurs or representatives contained mainly lies and unfounded allegations was unreasonable as it was well known that reports were based on careful review of information from a wide range of sources. Secondly, those supporting that view claimed that quiet diplomacy and friendly persuasion were more effective than individual country reports. However, there was scant evidence to support that argument; in fact, in most cases, it had been multilateral action or public opinion which had led to the desired results. Thirdly, it had been said that the right to economic development should prevail over civil and political rights. In the view of his delegation, the protection and promotion of one category of rights did not exempt States from the protection and promotion of other categories of rights. Fourthly, it was claimed that special rapporteurs and representatives examined the situation in only a limited number of countries. While his delegation was concerned about the problem of selectivity, it did not believe that the solution laid in eliminating all individual country reports. A more promising approach would be to carry out a more thorough examination of human rights situations. Fifthly, some States advocated respect for a nation's cultural, social and other particularities in implementing human rights. In his delegation's view,

(Mr. Osvald, Sweden)

that was by far the most disturbing argument because it undermined and rendered superfluous the very notion of universality, which was the basis of the effort to protect and promote respect for human rights.

23. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was the indispensable condition for building a humane, peaceful and secure world. The forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights would provide an opportunity to plan for more efficient monitoring mechanisms and other actions which would strengthen universal respect for human rights.

24. Mr. MARUYAMA (Japan) said that a successful World Conference on Human Rights was of great importance to United Nations human rights activities. It was therefore regrettable that the Preparatory Committee had failed to reach a consensus regarding the Conference agenda. Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.18 could break that impasse: while not perfect, it provided a realistic approach and could help move the preparations forward. Adoption of the draft resolution in no way implied that a State would be prohibited from discussing any particular matter at the Conference.

25. His Government was pleased to note that the General Assembly had approved an increase in the 1992-1993 regular budget of the Centre for Human Rights and had approved certain redeployments and additional posts. However, the Centre must make the best use of its available resources. One of its most valuable services was to promote public awareness of human rights and it should continue to cooperate closely with the Department of Public Information to that end. However, materials were often issued too late to be of value. The Centre should accordingly strive to speed up publication of materials for the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, for which opening ceremonies would take place the following week. His country would continue to make substantial contributions to the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights.

26. Human rights were increasingly linked to other issues of concern to the international community. Close cooperation between the various parts of the United Nations system was more important than ever and, in that connection, further consideration should be given to the proposed human rights monitoring team. There was a particularly close relationship between human rights and mass exoduses; countries were also paying more attention to the connection between human rights and development. Japan had drawn up a charter on official development assistance which stipulated, inter alia, that in making decisions regarding the initiation or continuation of such assistance, due regard must be given to efforts to promote human rights and democracy in the country concerned.

27. His country firmly believed that human rights were universal and that it was the duty of every State, regardless of its cultural traditions and its economic and political system, to protect and promote those rights. There were simply no circumstances under which it was justifiable to disregard human rights.

(Mr. Maruyama, Japan)

28. Respect for human rights was most effectively promoted through the United Nations system of fact-finding and monitoring, which could only function effectively with the cooperation of the States concerned. In investigating human rights situations, it was important not to lose sight of the main objective, which was to identify and curb violations of human rights rather than to isolate or antagonize States.

29. His Government was concerned about allegations of violations of human rights in several countries. It endorsed the objective of achieving democracy and respect for human rights in Myanmar and noted with interest from document A/47/651 that, according to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, a number of important developments had occurred since April 1992 which might affect the situation of human rights in that country. It called on the Government of Myanmar to take further steps to improve the situation with a view to moving towards democracy, and hoped that the Government would cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur as he conducted his independent examination of the situation.

30. Japan was concerned that there was apparently little or no improvement in the human rights situation in a number of countries: the situation in Afghanistan had not yet improved, despite the collapse of the former political regime; Cuba had refused to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur's request to visit that country; political repression was still rampant in Haiti; massive violations of human rights were taking place in Iraq, particularly the rights of the Kurdish and Shiite populations; and Iran had apparently refused to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur assigned to that country. While there had been some progress in South Africa and El Salvador, those countries were far from the goal of full respect for human rights. His delegation strongly condemned the continued violations of human rights, in particular the heinous policy of ethnic cleansing, in the former Yugoslavia. It had accordingly supported the convening of the first special session of the Commission on Human Rights, held in August 1992.

31. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) said that the international community must continue to give priority, over any other consideration, to humanitarian principles and to creating the conditions for full enjoyment of human rights. In that context, his delegation reaffirmed the indivisibility of economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights.

32. Implementation of the right to development must not be deferred; progress towards peace must be reflected in the area of international economic relations. Advances thus far in ensuring respect for human rights might be jeopardized if the current international economic situation continued; addressing that issue called for the firm commitment of the international community. His delegation believed that full enjoyment of the right to development was essential to achieving economic and social welfare. It was time for States to recognize that differences in economic development were responsible for the mass exoduses of workers and to take action by becoming

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, which thus far had only two signatories.

33. His delegation had already expressed its dissatisfaction with the selective approach involved in investigating human rights violations, where political interests were mixed with objective concerns. Such an approach was contrary to the principle of universality, which was essential to promoting and protecting human rights. Selectivity was also dangerous because it diverted attention from the current new threats to human rights manifested in the resurgence of racism, xenophobia and ethnic rivalry in various parts of the world.

34. It was only through international cooperation that advances could be achieved in the field of human rights, not through confrontation and political sanctions. Such cooperation must give due regard to national efforts and the internal jurisdiction of States. The World Conference on Human Rights would provide an opportunity to reaffirm the spirit of equity and objectivity which had informed early human rights efforts.

35. His country was committed, legally and in practice, to ensuring full respect for human rights. Accordingly, it continued to participate actively in international human rights forums; was party to the principal human rights instruments and fulfilled its obligations under those instruments. Included in its first periodic report to the Committee against Torture was information on the federal law of 1991 to prevent and punish acts of torture; various amendments to his country's penal code and code of penal procedure; results of the programme against immunity; and action taken against public officials found guilty of acts of torture.

36. With a view to improving the administration of justice, his Government had recently set up a citizen's committee, composed of members of political parties. The committee's responsibilities included monitoring the activities of the Office of the Attorney-General and of public officials; making recommendations with regard to the penal system; and ensuring justice for indigenous peoples.

37. Ms. KALNIETE (Latvia) said that her country was deeply concerned about the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and areas of the former Soviet Union and commended the United Nations and other international organizations for their efforts to find solutions.

38. With particular reference to item 149, she said that the report of the fact-finding mission invited to her country to investigate alleged discriminatory practices against minorities would provide an objective appraisal of the human rights situation in Latvia. She encouraged other States which had been the subject of similar allegations to request such fact-finding missions. Her Government was perplexed by the Russian Federation's

(Ms. Kalniete, Latvia)

decision to raise allegations of mass violations of human rights (A/47/247, annex), without demonstrating any factual support for such allegations. In fact, the report of the mission, which was being reproduced as a United Nations document, revealed no gross or systematic violations of human rights in her country.

39. The restoration of the de jure independence of the Republic of Latvia had been followed by a decision of the Supreme Council to ratify a series of a large number of international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights. Her Government was committed to the restoration of all those rights which had existed in Latvia prior to the Soviet invasion of 1940.

40. In order to facilitate the re-establishment of statehood, her country was registering all residents or their descendants recognized as citizens by the Constitution of 1922 and the 1919 and 1927 laws governing citizenship. Other persons residing in Latvia were also being legally registered and would be entitled to permanent residence until they chose to become naturalized citizens. Her country recognized the inherent legal right of all its stateless residents to choose any foreign citizenship they found appropriate; between 93 and 99 per cent of residents would be candidates for citizenship, depending on the residency requirements to be decided by the law on naturalization currently being drafted.

41. Since the beginning of the century, her country's indigenous population had dramatically decreased as a result of the Stalin purges, repression following the 1940 Soviet occupation and, in percentage, through migration to Latvia of other nationalities. In order to eliminate the vestiges of five decades of Soviet occupation and settlement, her country reserved the right to implement a policy of affirmative action, by granting advantages to its indigenous population. Such a policy would not affect the human rights of stateless residents, as both citizens and non-citizens enjoyed freedom of travel, speech, assembly, religious worship and choice of residence. Citizens and permanent residents alike were guaranteed the right to choose their occupation and to receive pensions, unemployment benefits, health care and housing.

42. The question of the status of former Soviet military forces and their families and of safeguarding their legal and social rights was a subject of bilateral negotiations. Her country was prepared to honour commitments which did not threaten its sovereignty and security and which were consistent with international law. The problem of retired military persons residing in Latvia was a different issue. Many of those individuals considered that their primary task was to resist official policies of the Government, which, in turn, had an obligation to protect its citizens and loyal residents against the actions of hostile forces by not permitting them to acquire certain political rights. None the less, all residents were guaranteed the same social protections.

(Ms. Kalniete, Latvia)

43. Legislation had been enacted to restore the Latvian language to its former position. May 1992 had marked the end of the three-year period set to learn the official State language and the beginning of testing the language skills of non-Latvian speakers working in State institutions and enterprises. Not a single complaint had been lodged regarding discrimination on the basis of an unlawful application of the State language law.

44. The situation of national minorities and ethnic groups in the Russian Federation presented a sharp contrast to the cultural autonomy rights granted to Russians and other national minority groups in Latvia. Though there were 210,000 Latvians residing in the Russian Federation, there was not a single Latvian school, newspaper or regular radio programme.

45. In the two short years since the restoration of her country's independence, much had been accomplished to enhance the rebirth of minorities and ethnic groups. Education was available in several languages and there were numerous cultural societies. Censorship had been abolished and laws had been passed guaranteeing freedom of the press and the right of each person to receive and impart accurate information.

46. As in any other State in transition to an economy based on private initiative and ownership, economic and social difficulties tended to create a high degree of social volatility in her country. Economic difficulties were being addressed by the Government in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and several other international bodies. Her country was striving to create, through law, a just and democratic State in which all residents, citizens and non-citizens were guaranteed the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a fact which served as a basis for hope in the future.

47. Mr. LI Daoyu (China) said that in order for the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights to be a success, it should reflect the reality of international human rights activities and pay special attention to the concerns of the densely populated developing countries. Priority should be given to addressing the gross violations of human rights resulting from racism, apartheid, colonialism and foreign aggression and to finding more effective ways to terminate such acts and support peoples in their struggle for self-determination. The Conference should introduce effective measures for the realization of the right to development, ensure the universality and impartiality of human rights, and reiterate the principles of State sovereignty and respect for the right of all countries to choose their path to development. The Conference should also enhance international cooperation based strictly on the principles of the United Nations Charter and on mutual respect and equal exchange.

48. If the international community genuinely cared about the human rights situation in developing countries, then it should help to reduce their external debt burden, provide them with unconditional assistance and create a

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

better international environment for their survival and development. In too many cases, human rights were artificially politicized and used as a tool to pursue a certain ideology. His Government continued to support the United Nations in its efforts for universal promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and was committed to the World Conference on Human Rights. It also favoured increasing financial support to the least developed countries to ensure universal participation in the Conference.

49. Mr. LOPEZ OSPINA (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that, by virtue of its mandate, UNESCO was closely involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the right of all to education, the right to participate in cultural life and scientific progress, and freedom of information. Most human rights concerns were reflected in its activities and programmes.

50. UNESCO also directly promoted human rights through its programmes of human rights research, training, publications and education, the latter being a particular priority. The ultimate goal was to establish a comprehensive system of human rights teaching and education for all individuals and groups at all levels of formal and non-formal education. In cooperation with a wide range of international partners, UNESCO prepared teaching materials and curricula, organized training and supported educational activities. It had created a prize for the teaching of human rights to encourage efforts in that area. A substantial contribution to human rights teaching in schools was made by the UNESCO Associated Schools Project, a network of educational institutions in 102 countries committed to the development of international education. The scheme was now being supplemented by a network of UNESCO Chairs on peace and human rights, catering for the university sector. It was currently engaged, in conjunction with the Centre for Human Rights, in organizing an international conference on human rights teaching and education, to be held in Canada in 1993. The conference was a follow-up to previous international congresses convened by UNESCO and was a preparatory step for the World Conference on Human Rights.

51. UNESCO had established its own procedure for the examination of alleged human rights violations within its spheres of competence. The procedure, which was confidential, had led to the release of a number of intellectuals, writers, journalists and human rights defenders, or to the lifting of the restrictions placed on them. The Director-General of UNESCO intervened publicly when human rights in UNESCO's fields of competence were violated or jeopardized.

52. Another area in which UNESCO contributed to the development of human rights was that of academic freedoms. It was concerned not only with such issues as the professional status of teachers and scientists, as in the past, but also with the rights and freedoms of members of the academic community, freedom of scientific research, the right to teach, freedom of intellectual

(Mr. Lopez Ospina, UNESCO)

cooperation and the special responsibilities of scientists. A further contribution was its study of the impact of scientific and technological progress on human rights, including the study of bioethics.

53. A crucial area of reflection concerned the links between human rights and democracy. Only a genuine democracy could guarantee the full implementation of human rights. Democracy was not merely a political system, but rested on cultural foundations, including patterns of knowledge acquisition and exchange, attitudes and values. Those cultural dimensions of democracy merited serious study, a process which UNESCO had initiated with the holding of two conferences since 1990. One theme to emerge strongly from those meetings was that only democracy could provide the framework within which minority cultures could find full expression, intercultural dialogue could effectively take place and tolerance could flourish. That idea was central, inter alia, to the activities of UNESCO's Amerindian programme. The process of reflection on the cultural context of human rights would be continued at a number of meetings and in numerous research projects in 1992-1993. Research and education on human rights must be supplemented by research and education on democratic practice, so that all citizens were able and willing to participate actively in the political, social, economic and cultural life of society and in the decision-making process.

54. Drawing attention to document A/47/445, he said that the initiative of the General Conference of UNESCO in proposing that 1995 should be declared United Nations year for tolerance had been prompted by Member States' deep concern about the emergence of new manifestations of intolerance - with the rise of various forms of fundamentalism and nationalism, racial and ethnic prejudice and the resurgence of anti-semitism - and the desire to sensitize public opinion to problems of exclusion and to promote tolerance and mutual understanding. The time had come for the international community to support the initiative of the General Conference.

Draft decision A/C.3/47/L.45, on the award of human rights prizes in 1993

55. The CHAIRMAN introduced the draft decision, which was submitted by the Chairman.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.49, on the right to development

56. The CHAIRMAN noted that Peru had been omitted from the list of sponsors.

57. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors and Austria, Côte d'Ivoire, Uruguay and Chile, introduced the draft resolution. It dealt with a subject of crucial importance, especially for developing countries, and was in many ways similar to previous resolutions which had been adopted by consensus; she hoped that that would be the case again and that additional sponsors would be forthcoming.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.52, on the situation of human rights in Estonia and Latvia

58. The CHAIRMAN, introducing the draft resolution, which was submitted by the Chairman, said that the text was the result of negotiations among the parties concerned and that he looked forward to its adoption.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.53, on the United Nations year for tolerance

59. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors and Egypt, introduced the draft resolution. He said that UNESCO had taken the initiative in proposing the celebration of the year in 1995, which also marked that Organization's fiftieth anniversary. The draft had been submitted pursuant to resolution 5.6 of the General Conference of UNESCO and Economic and Social Council decision 1992/267, as was reported in the relevant note by the Secretary-General (A/47/445). The need for more vigorous action to promote mutual understanding and attitudes of tolerance had become necessary as a result of recent world developments. The draft resolution took account of the necessary procedures and guidelines concerning international years. If a year for tolerance was proclaimed, UNESCO would take the lead in preparing for and observing it. A favourable decision by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, would have no budgetary implications for the United Nations. The sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.54 on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights

60. Ms. FOSTIER (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors and Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Honduras and Thailand, introduced the draft resolution, which reflected the interest of the United Nations in the advancement of human rights at the regional level. The purpose of the draft resolution was to stress the importance of closer cooperation between the United Nations and regional mechanisms, whose activities should be mutually reinforcing. The sponsors hoped that, as in the past, the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.55, on the plight of street children

61. Mr. TISSOT (United Kingdom) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and the Marshall Islands. He drew attention to an error in paragraph 11, in which the word "consider" should read "reconsider". The question of street children was a serious problem which deserved special attention. There were now an estimated 13 million such children, and their numbers were growing. Virtually every country was affected and the sponsors had decided that a general resolution, which did not specify any particular situation, would be a valuable contribution to raising awareness of the problem. The draft resolution was designed to show the outside world that the United Nations believed in the

(Mr. Tissot, United Kingdom)

full enjoyment of human rights for all sectors of society. The text had received wide support. Certain suggested additions had not been accepted because they would have altered the main thrust of the resolution which was to draw attention to the plight of street children worldwide and urge respect for the human rights of those children in particular, whose rights were often violated or ignored and who lived as homeless outcasts. Consultations on the text were continuing, and the sponsors hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.56, on the strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights

62. Ms. HADJI (Greece), speaking on behalf of the original sponsors and Togo and Grenada, introduced draft resolution. She said that it was the Committee's responsibility to ensure that the mandate of the Centre for Human Rights was carried out in full, on time, effectively and efficiently, in accordance with the priority accorded to human rights in the Charter and in response to the high expectations of the international community in the field of human rights. The Centre faced a critical situation. Its workload had increased dramatically in the previous decade, while its staff and resources had been reduced, leaving it with a backlog of cases and requests from Governments and impairing the quality of its services. The Secretary-General was commended for his efforts to improve the financial situation of the Centre, as reported in document A/47/702, but many of the measures taken so far were of a temporary nature, and the resources of the Centre were still grossly inadequate and its situation remained precarious. The sponsors pledged their support for the Centre's new leadership, but considered that the Committee must continue to voice its concern until the necessary measures were taken to ensure that the Centre received the staff and resources it needed to fulfil its mandate.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.